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AN

APPEAL

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE

NORTHERN AND EASTERN STATES,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

NEGRO SLAVERY

IN

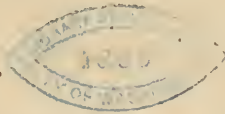
SOUTH CAROLINA.

Wm. L. G. Burke

BY A SOUTH CAROLINIAN.

I like a clamour, when there has been an outrage: The fire-bell at midnight breaks your sleep, but saves you from being burned.

Burke.



NEW-YORK:

1834.

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AN APPEAL, &c.

THE open denunciations from abroad, and the foul insinuations at home, on the subject of negro slavery in South Carolina, persuade us that this appeal will find sufficient apology for its present appearance. Every one must perceive, that the efforts which the Abolitionists are making, have for their ultimate object, the total destruction of our slave institutions. They have already carried their purpose so far, as to create a degree of disaffection between the people of the North and South, which has caused many to tremble for the permanence of the Union. Such has been their improvident conduct, that, even in their own states, they have raised up an excitement against themselves, which has but recently required military interference for their protection. From their flagitious efforts, commenced in the press and carried to the pulpit, the grossest slanders have been circulated against the southern slaveholder. It sometimes happens, from a want of proper information easily got at, that these errors, from frequent repetition, are at length considered sober truths; and the people, upon whom their denunciations are so freely bestowed, necessarily become the objects of bitter and undeserved reproach. Under such a state of things, there should be no suppression of the truth; and he who does so, when in his power to unfold it, violates the fulfilment of his positive duties to society not less than to his own conscience. Unwilling, therefore, that any such neglect should be chargeable to us, however humble the ability with which we come to the task, we beg leave to propose to our fellow citizens of the non-slaveholding states, the consideration of a few leading propositions, which we hold absolutely essential to a fair consideration of the subject.

I. That, a system of slavery has existed in every age of the world—was established in the Old, and sanctioned in the New Testament.

II. That, the system was forced upon South Carolina by the trade of Great Britain and of the Northern and Eastern States.

III. That, the Carolina slave, at this time, enjoys most of the civil and religious immunities of his master,

IV. That, no plan yet devised, can better his present condition.

And now for these several propositions—the first in order.

That slavery has existed from the earliest ages of the world, is apparent on every page of its history. The Mosaic law, as far back as the time of Abraham, gave it the fullest sanction. We find, with that patriarch, no less than three hundred and eighty slaves born in his own household.* These he trained to arms, and with them, pursued the four kings, who had taken captive his brother. Having conquered them, we see his right of reducing their subjects to slavery distinctly recognised—"and the king of Sodom said unto Abraham, give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself."† Proceed further in the Mosaic history, and we hear Abraham's servant boastfully exclaiming—"the Lord hath blest my master greatly; and he is become great, and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and *men-servants* and *maid-servants*, and camels and asses."‡ To prove too, that such property was considered then, as now, absolute in the master—of which he could dispose as he pleased—we find Abimeleck making a free-gift offering, unto Abraham, of *men-servants* and *maid-servants*, in the same class with sheep and oxen. Any one, who will take the trouble to examine for himself, will discover, that, among the Hebrews, slavery, in many instances, was considered a privilege conferred on the vanquished, which saved him from an ignominious death. Thus, in Deut. xx. 14, and in Deut. xxi. 21, every male child was smote with the sword. In the war with the Midianites, every male, and all the women, except the virgins, (who were made slaves out of mercy,) underwent a like fate. War was undoubtedly the first source from whence the Hebrews learned to acquire this species of property. At a very remote period, Nimrod, in becoming a hunter of men, had taught them the practice. In process of time they extended their right to *purchase*; a right which was regulated by a complete system of laws, in which the Hebrew himself could pass away his freedom by a deed of bargain and sale. Thus, a man could sell himself through poverty,§ a case which according to the commentators, very frequently occurred; a father could sell his children;|| a creditor could sell his debtor to liquidate the debt;¶ and a thief,

* Gen. xiv. 14.

† Gen. xiv. 21.

‡ Gen. xxiv. 35.

§ Ex. xxi. 7.

¶ 2 Kings, iv. 1. 4.

who could not pay the fine imposed upon him, could be sold by the authorities to satisfy the sum.* To show, too, to what an illimitable extent they carried this right, Machielis, in his able commentary on the laws of Moses, states, that in the war with the Midianites, the twelve thousand men, who had made the campaign, received fifteen thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight virgins; the rest of the Israelites, in number almost six hundred thousand, received fifteen thousand six hundred and eighty; Eleazar the priest, thirty-two; and the adult Levites, who amounted to more than eight thousand, received three hundred and twenty. "These," says he, "were all sold at auction, and became the absolute property of the purchaser, who could do with them, and their offspring, whatever he pleased."

Having thus briefly referred to a few of the modes, in which slaves were acquired among the Hebrews, let us see how the Mosaic law permitted them to be treated. They could be beat to such an extent, that, unless death followed under the immediate infliction, the master was secure from punishment.† If, however, the victim died under the blows, the murderer was punished in the discretion of the magistrate. The lawgiver, no doubt, framed these laws with the natural presumption, such being the interest of the master in his property, that its value alone would sufficiently insure his clemency—for, as he very briefly and quaintly expresses it, "he (the slave) is his money." With a few exceptions, the Hebrew slave was completely at his master's mercy—his life, which was regarded in the careless manner already noticed, was all that the law protected. It is true, a stroke, which lost him an eye or a tooth, gained him his freedom; but this was of such rare occurrence, that the statute which enacted it may almost be said to have been a dead letter.

"With regard to the assertion," says Professor Dew, "that slavery is against the spirit of Christianity, we are ready to admit the general assertion, but deny most positively, that there is any thing in the Old or New Testament, which would go to show that the system, when once introduced, ought at all events to be abrogated, or that the master commits any offence in holding slaves. The children of Israel themselves were slaveholders, and were not condemned for it. All the patriarchs themselves were slaveholders. Abraham had more than three hundred; Isaac had a great store of them; and even the patient Job himself, had '*a very great household.*' When the children

* Ex. xxii. 3, 4, 5.

† Ex. xxi. 21.

of Israel conquered the land of Canaan, they made one whole tribe ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water;’ and they were at that very time under the special guidance of Jehovah; they were permitted expressly to purchase slaves of the heathens, and keep them as an inheritance for their posterity; and even the children of Israel might be enslaved for six years. When we turn, too, to the New Testament, we find not one single passage at all calculated to disturb the conscience of the slaveholder. No one can read it without seeing and admiring, that the meek and humble Saviour of the world in no instance meddled with the established institutions of mankind; he came to save a fallen world, and not to excite the black passions of men, and array them in deadly hostility against each other. From no one did he turn away; his plan was offered alike to all—to the monarch and the subject, the rich and the poor, the master and the slave. He was born in the Roman world—a world in which the most galling slavery existed, a thousand times more cruel than the slavery in our own country; and yet he nowhere encourages insurrection—nowhere fosters discontent; but exhorts always to implicit obedience and fidelity. What a rebuke does the practice of the Redeemer of mankind imply upon some of his nominal disciples of the day, who seek to destroy the contentment of the slaves, to rouse their most deadly passions, to break up the deep foundations of society, and to lead on to a night of darkness and confusion! ‘Let every man,’ says Paul, ‘abide in the same calling wherein he is called.’* Again, ‘Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrines be not blasphemed; and they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.’† Servants are even commanded to be faithful and obedient to unkind masters. ‘Servants,’ says St. Peter, ‘be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but to the froward. For what glory is it if when ye shall be buffeted for your faults ye take it patiently; but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.’‡ These and many other passages in the New Testament, most convincingly prove that slavery in the Roman world was nowhere charged as fault or crime upon the holder, and every where is the most implicit obedience enjoined.”§

* 1 Corinthians, vii. 20, 21.

† 1 Peter, ii. 18, 20.

‡ 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

§ Political Register, vol. 2. p. 820.

Leaving the Jews, we trace the existence of slavery throughout Chaldea, Egypt, and Arabia, until we find it pervading the better part of the globe. Homer, who makes frequent allusion to the subject, causes Hector, in the following language, to bewail the hard fate of Andromache, should she fall into the hands of the enemy.

—“No dire presage so wounds my mind;
My mother's death, the ruin of my kind,
Not Priam's hoary hairs defil'd with gore;
Not all my brothers, gasping on the shore,
As thine, Andromache! Thy grief I dread;—
I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led:
In Argive looms our battles to design,
And woes, of which so large a part was thine:
To bear the victor's hard commands, or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring.
There, while you groan beneath the load of life,
They cry, ‘Behold the mighty Hector's wife.’”

Pope's Iliad, VI.

At a later period of Grecian history, we are told that Philip made slaves of all the Thebans whom he conquered; and Alexander, following the example of his father, did the same. The degraded condition of the Helots is so familiar to every reader, as scarce to demand a notice here. They were considered as mere things, appended to the soil; and whenever they became too numerous for the safety of their Spartan masters, they were put to death without scruple, as so many wild beasts. Athenæus* tells us that when the free population of Athens was only 21,000, its slaves amounted to 400,000; and that the small island of Egina, alone, contained as many as 470,000—a number nearly twice as great as contained in the entire state of South Carolina. Nor was the system of slavery carried on to a less extent in Rome. Many a Roman master owned as many as 10,000 slaves. In the war with the Etrurians, Camillus made slaves of all the prisoners taken; and Fabius, when he subdued Tarentum, reduced all of its inhabitants to servitude. Coriolanus did not scruple to make slaves of his own countrymen, and Julius Cæsar, at the close of one campaign, sold as many as 50,000 captives. “These,” says Taylor, “lived in a much worse condition than any cattle whatever. They had no head in the state—no name, title, or register. They were not capable of being

* Cooper's Justinian, page 412.

injured: nor could they take by purchase or descent; they had no heirs, and therefore could make no will: exclusive of what was called their *peculum*, whatever they acquired was their master's. They could neither plead nor be pleaded for; but were excluded from all civil concern whatsoever.* In short, they were entitled to none of the privileges of the Republic—they were considered as mere machines; could be tortured for evidence, and put to death at the will of the master; and by a law of the Twelve Tables, any creditor could sell his debtor, or put him to death. Cicero tells us, that they were continually chained at the doors of their masters, to give admittance to the visiter.† And Seneca, who lived at a much later period, says, that the neighbours, about the third hour of the night, hear the noise of whips and lashes, and the shrieks and agonies of expiring nature; and, on inquiring, they find it is some master taking an account of the day's labour, and giving to refractory slaves due discipline and correction. If one of these unhappy creatures attempted escape, he was branded on the forehead with a red-hot iron; and if a master was found murdered, his slaves were, all of them, instantly put to death. As if this list of barbarities could find no end, we read of one Vedius Pollio, who, in the refined age of Augustus, when the Christian religion had been already promulgated, threw, such of his slaves as offended him, into his fish-ponds, to fatten his lampreys. At more subsequent periods, the Roman slave was better treated; but his servitude was at no time totally abolished, or even favoured with any thing like the degree of indulgence with which he is considered by the laws and people of the South.

Among the ancient Germans, Tacitus tells us, that a species of slavery existed, which, when acquired, gave the master a complete control over the life and services of the slave. "What is extraordinary," says he, "they play at dice, when sober, as serious business; and that, with such a desperate venture of gain or loss, that, when every thing else is gone, they set their liberties and persons on the last throw. The loser goes into voluntary servitude; and though young and strong, patiently suffers himself to be bound and sold. The slaves thus acquired are exchanged in commerce, or put to death, that the winner may get rid of the scandal of his victory.‡

But it is among the Africans themselves, that slavery has always existed in its most painful features. Carthage was full of slaves; and

* Taylor's Civil Law, p. 429.

† Div. 1 Lib. 26.

‡ Aikin's Tac. De Mos. Ger. p. 73.

as far back as the time of Terence, who introduces an Æthiopian slave into his play of the Eunuch, Africa "was spoiled of its sons."* Indeed, from the earliest records of this ill-fated country, the slave system seems to have been carried on in a manner the most intolerable to humanity. In a letter to George III. in 1789, the Emperor of Dahomey asserted, that "he could lead 500,000 armed men into the field, that being the pursuit to which all his subjects were bred, and the women only staying at home to plant and manure the earth. He had himself fought two hundred and nine battles, with great reputation and success, and had conquered the great King of Ardah. The King's head was to this day preserved with the flesh and hair; the heads of his generals were distinguished by being placed on each side of the doors of their Fetiches; with the heads of the inferior officers they paved the spaces before the doors; and the heads of the common soldiers formed a sort of fringe or out-work round the walls of the palace. Since the war, he had experienced the greatest good fortune, and he hoped in good time to be able to complete the out walls of all his great houses, to the number of seven, in the same manner."† From accounts, such as these, it is manifest that the slave trade, however iniquitous in its principles, has, in most instances, meliorated the condition of the African captive, by taking him into servitude, when death, or the most excruciating torments, would have been otherwise his portion.

Having thus shown, we think conclusively, that slavery has existed, in some state or other, in most parts of the world—that it found its establishment in the Old Testament, and its recognition and sanction in the New—and having sufficiently dwelt upon the horrible nature and character of its trade in all past periods, and of its many more revolting alternatives, we shall now proceed, under our second proposition, to show that the system of slavery was forced upon South Carolina by the trade of Great Britain and the Northern and Eastern states.

It is immaterial to our argument, to enter into the question, whether we hold our slaves by a just or an unjust tenure. It is sufficient for our purpose that we find them among us. No people have more regretted the existence of such a condition of things than the people of Carolina. The evil has been forced upon us, not by ourselves, but by foreigners—by Europeans generally, and by our Northern and Eastern brethren, in particular. The slave trade was for the first time commenced by the Genoese traders, under a patent from Charles V. It must be recollected, too, that before either of the North American colonies were

* Brit. Enc. Art. Slavery.

† Pol. Reg. vol. 2, p. 775.

planted, England had already given sanction to the system by the legal incorporation of a Society for that purpose. As soon as her colonies became settled, she declared, by parliamentary enactment, that, to supply them with slaves, was not only necessary to their prosperity, but essentially beneficial to her own interests. South Carolina was among the very first to oppose this declaration. Her resistance brought out, on the part of the mother country, an order forbidding all Governors, under the severest penalty, to countenance any law which should have for its object the destruction of the slave trade. The same opposition was offered by other of the colonies; and when, as late as 1774, an attempt was made in the island of Jamaica to put an end to the system, the answer was—that “the people of Great Britain could not allow the colonies to check or discourage, in any degree, a traffic so beneficial to the nation.”*

It surely should be no subject of wonder, that the same spirit of commercial avarice, in time, seized upon the merchants of our own country. The great success attending the English trader, in this market, induced many speculators, North and East, soon after the revolution, to engage in a pursuit promising to be so profitable. By their united operations, in the short period between the years 1804 and 1807, no less than 39,075 slaves were imported into South Carolina. Of this number, 18,043 were brought in American vessels; Charleston and its vicinity importing only 2000. “Showing,” says Judge Smith, in a sarcasm strictly merited, but which we now adopt in no unkind spirit, “that, when a profitable market can be found, they (the people of the Northern and Eastern states) can sell human flesh with as easy a conscience as any other article.”† In addition to these facts, it is well known to all acquainted with the Southern slave market, that its demands have been supplied, in no inconsiderable degree, by slaves sold by their masters from the North and East, to escape the emancipatory laws of those regions. But enough has been said to establish our position. Were it necessary we could go into details which would prove that South Carolina, in Congress as well as in her colonial legislature, has always been the foremost to vote against the slave trade; and that, finally, through her endeavours, its arrest was mainly effected on the part of the United States.

Passing to our third proposition, we shall now endeavour to show that the Carolina slave, at this time, enjoys most of the civil and religious immunities of his master.

* See Barham's History of the Abolition of Slavery; also Appendix I.

† Speech on the Missouri question.

Virtually, the slave in Carolina possesses most of the civil freedom of the white man. Civil freedom there, as it is recognised all over the world, is nothing more than the protection of life, limb, reputation, and property. The Carolina master enjoys these advantages, and no more; while the slave, with a few exceptions, and those in his favour, has all these rights secured likewise to himself. Against him, as against his master, you cannot make an assault with impunity. If you take his life, yours must pay the forfeit—if he takes yours, like you, he has the benefit of a regular form of trial by sworn freeholders, who, from the fact of their being, in most cases, the owners of slaves themselves, are generally rather inclined to evade the law, than to vindicate its exactions. In all criminal prosecutions against him, his master, or guardian, by a simple plea, can have him either immediately brought to trial, or can traverse his case until all excitement against him shall have subsided. Upon trial, his accusers must confront him; and he is entitled to compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favour. He can have the ablest counsel employed in his behalf, with a court if at all partial, favourably so, from the reasons already urged in this particular. If found guilty, he has the right of appeal, can be reprieved, and finally pardoned. When any one assails his reputation, and asperses his character for honesty and faithfulness, (and this of itself should speak volumes in reply to those who regard and denounce the southern slave-holder as a ruthless tyrant,) his master, or guardian, may bring an action for damages, and no judge or jury in the country dare refuse to award them. Indeed, such is the humanity of public feeling in his behalf, that out of the many cases of this nature in our reports, there is not one, where, for an assault against him, the damages have not been greater than in the instance of the free white man. Does any one steal from him, whether white or black, the offender is made amenable to the laws, and receives, according to the circumstances, the full punishment for felony. It is true, the slave cannot, upon the stand of justice, bear witness against the white man; nor can he of himself bring his claim for redress into court; but in all instances, his master, or his guardian, can do so for him; and we say it, without the least fear of contradiction, that the instance is not known in the state of South Carolina, in which, upon proper provocation or necessity, they have ever failed to do so. To go even farther, such is the sensitiveness with which the Carolina master views every violation of the rights of his slave, that the cases are numerous, where, for this cause alone, the severest disputes have taken place, as well in court as out of it, between their proprietors. Indeed, public opinion there, has al-

most made it a general rule of honour, that any interference with the privileges of the slave in the faithful exercises of his duties, or of his own rights, on the part of others, must be considered an indignity to the master, which should be as quickly resented as if directly put upon himself.

Nor, in a political point of view, is the condition of the slave so deficient in advantages and privilege, or so irksome to his pride and feelings, as some would make it out. In name, we must admit, that he is deprived of his suffrage. But if this right means (as it undoubtedly does) that which secures him a representation, then the slave has little of which to complain. Substantially, he is represented as much as his master; for the interest of the proprietor is emphatically that interest which best provides for the well-being of the subordinate. Every page of local legislation in that state proves the truth of this remark.

As regards his personal rights, the law has not left him unprotected. While it compels the master to furnish him with proper food, shelter, and clothing, it forbids that he shall be worked over fourteen hours out of the twenty-four; and while defining strictly what the punishment shall be, affixes its penalty on all excess in its exercise. In addition to these statutory provisions, the feelings of the master, together with, and powerfully acted upon by, public opinion, in a great degree, aids the kindly intentions of the law. Thus, while in Europe, whole communities have perished from famine and disease, neglected, and without concern, public or private, among the Southern slave population even the apprehension of these influences has never been known. In health they are always provided with clothing and all necessary and healthy, though plain, food. In sickness, the obvious interest of the master impels him to procure for them the best medical attendance; which, indeed, in most plantations, is generally secured by annual contract with some regular physician. Thus provided for—with physical pain as much mitigated as is practicable with science, the approach of death is free from those thousand anxieties, which beset the mind of the freeman, who leaves his children without protection, and that considerate concern, which the Black well knows, must belong to the relations of the slave and master.

Religious immunities are also secured to the Carolina slave. Independent of the full enjoyment of the Sabbath, which the law yields him, whenever his tasks have been completed, and these, as will be seen, are of easy performance, he is permitted to attend any religious meeting properly conducted. Whenever he has been restricted in this privilege, the cause can be traced to the impolitic and unwise

interference of ministers, who have brought him lessons, as inconsistent with their Christian mission, as they have been dangerous to the quietude of the hearer. If indiscreet or evil men will penetrate into a country so situated, and, forgetful of those divine precepts, which teach diligence and faithfulness to the slave, and lenity and mildness to the master—if, forgetful of such precepts, they will step aside from their calling, to interfere with the domestic and political institutions of a nation, and excite its dependants, and ignorant castes, to the bloodiest insurrections, they must expect, not only to lose their privilege in this particular, but that the liberty of the slave will be abridged. The same conduct, in an European community, among freemen, which these teachers have been for years exercising in reference to the people of South Carolina, would immediately call forth the most rigid interposition of government. It is something unreasonable, then, to censure those, who, in placing certain laws in their statute books for their protection and safety, have only sought to provide for, and to meet, such exigencies. The case is perfectly unknown, in Carolina, where, with a judicious teacher and proper religious instruction, the slave has been withheld from the full enjoyment of these immunities. It is to the interest of the master that he should be thus instructed, for experience has taught, that religious education makes him more honest and faithful to all the purposes of his employer. The impression too, which so many entertain, that the slave is excluded from partaking of the same Christian rites with the freeman, is grossly unjust, and is abundantly refuted, in the fact, that in all our churches, the same communion is indiscriminately administered from the same cup to Black and White alike. In extending our remark in this place, we do it with the awkward consciousness, when called upon to admit, that it does not unfrequently occur, that, the number of the former participants, greatly exceeds that of the latter.

But it has been urged as a great objection to the Southern system of slavery, that the slave is not permitted to receive education, and is thus deprived of the means of acquiring for himself a knowledge of the Scriptures. If such an embarrassment could be taken away, without bringing with its removal the evils which have so frequently resulted, we might be disposed to admit the force of the objection, and to desire a relaxation of our laws in this respect. The safety of both parties, however, forbids such an indulgence. Whenever extended, the slave has been always deluded, and instead of learning to read precepts of benevolence and love, the first lessons he has been taught, have been those of disaffection and revolt. It is in view of this, that he has been

denied any other than oral instruction. Able and efficient teachers are provided him for this purpose. He hears the Bible read, along with the Whites, at every religious meeting, and at stated times and places, he is catechised in a manner suited to his capacity. In fact, it is as common in Carolina to find the true Christian in the person of the slave, as in that of any other class or complexion in the world.

We shall now briefly conclude this appeal, by submitting, whether any plan yet devised can better the present condition of the Carolina slave. In making this inquiry, it becomes necessary that we revert to the condition of the free coloured persons in the states where they have been manumitted. Were it legitimate in this argument to offer our own testimony, we should say, that, from a careful observation, and no inconsiderable experience, we have nowhere met with a more degraded, profligate, and at the same time, a more unhappy class. But as such testimony, coming from us, would seem of very questionable propriety, we forbear to do more than suggest this particular to the consideration of all parties, and shall accordingly proceed to the examination of a body of facts and opinions, recently presented to the legislature of Connecticut. In a memorial to that enlightened body, and signed by a long list of its most distinguished constituents, we are told—"that, not a week, hardly a day passes, that they (the free coloured people) are not implicated in the violation of some law. Assaults and batteries, insolence to the whites, compelling a breach of the peace; riots in the streets, petty thefts, and continual trespasses on property, are such common occurrences, resulting from the license they enjoy, that they have ceased to become subjects of remark. It is but recently that a band of negroes paraded the streets of New-Haven, armed with clubs, pistols and dirks, with the avowed purpose of preventing the law of the land from being enforced against one of the species. Upon being accosted by an officer of justice, and commanded to retire peaceably to their homes, their only reply consisted of abuse, and threats of personal violence. The law was overshadowed; and the officer consulted his own safety in a timely retreat."* The memorial then proceeds to show that the evil complained of, has so rapidly progressed that the Whites have become the subjects of insult and abuse, whenever they have refused to descend to familiarity with them—that themselves, their wives and children, have been driven from the pavements, where they have not submitted to personal conflict—that from the licentiousness

* Memorial to the Legislature of Connecticut, 1834, page 4.

of their general habits, they have invariably depreciated the value of property by their location in its neighbourhood—and, that, from their notorious uncleanness and filth, they have become common nuisances to the community. The memorial goes on, and tells us that “the white man cannot labour upon equal terms with the negro. Those who have just emerged from a state of barbarism or slavery, have few artificial wants. Regardless of the decencies of life, and improvident of the future, the black can afford his services at a lower price than the white man. And as he is, in caste, below the influence of public opinion, he seldom hesitates in supplying any contingent wants, without the ceremony of contracts, or the efforts of toil. If native indolence should deter him from this course, he has no compunctions in supplying himself from the public storehouse, as a legal pauper. Whenever they come into competition, therefore, the white man is deprived of employment, or is forced to labour for less than he requires. He is compelled to yield the market to the African, and, with his family, ultimately becomes the tenant of an alms-house, or is driven from the state, to seek a better lot in western wilds. Thus, have thousands of our most valuable citizens been banished from home and kindred, for the accommodation of the most debased race that the civilized world has ever seen, and whom the false philanthropy of enthusiasts is hourly inviting, to deprive us of the benefits of civilized society.”

This, then, is the picture which the people of Connecticut, hitherto the most severe in their denunciations against the slave-holder, present of the free coloured population among them. Every observant traveller knows it to be correct, while the annual reports of all the penitentiaries prove, that the outline in truth comprehends every State in which the negro has been manumitted. As a contrast to this state of things, take the condition of the Carolina slave. We quote from a letter of the late Robert I. Turnbull, Esqr. of South Carolina, published in 1822.

“The condition of our slaves, within the last thirty years, has been considerably ameliorated. Their labour has not only been diminished, but they have been treated with more indulgence, and have had more attention paid to their comfort and accommodation than formerly. The introduction of mills and machinery for pounding and preparing the rice for market, which was previously accomplished by manual labour, forms a new era in the history of their state of labour. By this improvement, the reduction of hard work may be estimated at nearly one half, whilst the water culture in the management of the rice crop, practised by many planters, and the substitution of cotton for indigo on the high lands, have also greatly contributed to lessen their toil.

“No culture for our country can be easier than that of the cotton

plant. With the exception of the second and third hoeings, which generally take place in the month of May, there is, comparatively, *little or no labour* in attending to the crop, unless there be some defect in management; this sometimes occurs with careless planters, or with those who over-plant. With cotton there is no cutting, or carrying, or heavy harvesting. The pods, ripening in succession, and continuing for four and five months, make the harvest slow and tedious, but the work is *light and easy*, so much so, that all the pregnant women even, on the plantation, and weak and sickly negroes incapable of other labour, and all the boys and girls above nine and ten years of age, are then in requisition to assist in gathering the wool which hangs from the pods. Children are in fact the most useful hands at this season. From the smallness of their fingers and their low stature, they daily pick in more than many adults. Nor is the cleaning and preparing the crop for market, attended with labour. The ginning* of the cotton by machines constructed for the purpose, impelled by treadles, would to some appear a laborious employment; but it is not so, for most able bodied negroes would prefer to work at these than to sit down and pick the moats from the wool. In short, from the time that the seed is put into the ground, which is in March, until Christmas when the crop is harvested, *there is not*, with the exception of the second and third hoeing, already stated, *any hard labour performed by our slaves*.

"The mechanics and artizans of Europe, and of some sections of our own country, labour in their employments, not only all day, but during part of the night. Our negroes, on the contrary, have their tasks allotted to them, and these are so apportioned, that *there are few who cannot perform them by mid-day, or within an hour or two afterwards*. No matter what the work is, which a slave is ordered to perform, if its nature be such as to admit of his being *tasked*, he works under this *task* arrangement and no other; whether it be listing† of the ground, banking, hoeing, thinning of the plants, gathering in of corn or blades, or ditching or draining, splitting of rails, making of fences or cutting wood; his work for the day is known to him beforehand, long custom having fixed it. It may be easily imagined, that under such an arrangement, the slave goes to his work with cheerfulness, because when he accomplishes it, the rest of the day is at his own disposal, which he industriously applies to the cultivation of his own little garden or piece of ground allotted to him. It is in the season of *cotton picking* alone, that the slave labours (*if it can be called labour*) from sunrise to sun-set. This is a species of employment, in which *no task* can be assigned, for the quantity which a person can gather in a day depends upon the state of the field, the weather, the warmth or coolness of the day, and many other circumstances. At all other seasons of the year, upon all well regulated plantations, the average time of labouring does not exceed *seven or eight hours* in the twenty-four. The working

* That is separating the wool from the seed.

† Taking off the sward with a hoe and drawing it together as a foundation for a bed for the plant.

of our slaves by *task*, as it is called, distinguishes them from the labourers of other countries in an especial manner, when it is known, that the daily work allotted, is so *considerably within* that which it is in their power to perform. This daily task does not vary according to the arbitrary will and caprice of their owners, and although it is not fixed by law, it is so well settled by long usage, that upon every plantation it is the *same*. Should any owner increase the work beyond what is customary, he subjects himself to the reproach of his neighbours, and to such discontent amongst his slaves as to make them of but little use to him.

The daily tasks are these :

Cutting fire-wood, - - -	one cord.
Splitting rails, - - -	one hundred.
Listing ground, - - -	{ a quarter of an acre, or 105 feet square, into 21 beds, 5 feet apart.
Breaking or bedding, - - -	
Hoing of cotton or corn, - - -	Do. do.
Ginning of cotton, - - -	half an acre.
Ginning of cotton, - - -	twenty-five lbs. clean.
Moating of do. - - -	fifty lbs. clean.
Ditching in light land, - - -	420 cubic feet.
Do. in clay do. - - -	210 do.
Gathering blades, - - -	half an acre.
Breaking in corn, ready for carting, - - -	do. do.
Digging in potatoes, - - -	do. do.

“The subsistence of the slaves consists, from March until August, of corn, ground into grists or meal, which, made into what is called *hominy*, or baked into corn bread, furnishes a most substantial and wholesome food. The other six months they are fed upon the sweet potato, which is boiled, baked, or roasted, as their taste or fancy may direct. These articles are distributed in weekly allowances, and in sufficient quantity, together with a proper allowance of salt. The skim milk or clabber of the dairy is divided daily. It would be very desirable if regular rations of bacon, or some other animal food could be furnished them; but as this cannot always be practicable, it is difficult to make it a matter of permanent regulation. Meat, therefore, when given, is only by way of indulgence or favour. In those seasons of the year when they are exposed to the most labour, they receive *bacon, salt fish*, and, *occasionally*, fresh meat. Those who live on creeks and rivers, are at no loss for an abundance of fish and oysters, to say nothing of the little comforts which all negroes have, by the raising and sale of their pigs, poultry, &c., which they are permitted to do. But take their subsistence as it is, without any allowance of meat; is it not infinitely preferable to the *oatmeal of Scotland*, and the *potatoes of Ireland*?—a species of food very inferior to the *sweet potato* of a southern soil. Our negroes could not work if fed upon the Irish potato.

“Their clothing consists of a winter and a summer suit; the former

of a jacket, waistcoat, and overalls of Welsh plains, and the latter of Osnaburg or homespun, or other substitutes. They have shoes, hats, and handkerchiefs, and other little articles, such as tobacco, pipes, rum, &c. Their dwellings consist of good clay cabins, with clay chimneys; but so much attention has of late years been paid to their comfort, in this particular, that it is now very common, particularly on the sea islands, to give them substantial framed houses, on brick foundations, and with brick chimneys. Many are of opinion that they enjoy more health in open temporary cabins, with ground or dirt floors; but this does not correspond with the experience of those who willingly incur the expense of better buildings. In sickness, they are taken care of; and on most plantations there are sick houses, or hospitals, for the reception of those who do not go out to work—a practice, which it would be well if it were more general. When the patient is *really* sick, every comfort and attention may be dispensed by such an institution; whilst to such as enter it only to skulk from labour, (which is peculiar to some negroes,) it becomes a *penitentiary*.

"To each head of a family is allotted a piece of ground around his house, as a garden spot, in addition to which, each labourer has fifty-two and a half feet by one hundred and five, set apart for him in the field. To some, more is allowed.

"That the slaves in South-Carolina are humanely treated, and that they are better provided with food and clothing than are the poor in most countries, will appear to any impartial observer. No better evidence need be adduced than their cheerfulness and mirth at all times, both in *town* and *country*.

"With all their mirth and merriment, however, they do not seem more contented than they were thirty or forty years ago, when the discipline was more rigid, their labour more constant, and their comforts fewer. This is undoubtedly owing to a *relaxation in discipline*, which experience abundantly proves has been almost carried *too far*. The regulations that would be applicable to whites entirely fail when applied to the government of slaves. The only principle upon which any authority over them can be maintained is *fear*; and he who denies this, has but little knowledge of them. Where there is this principle in the bosom of a slave, coupled with a strong sense of his inferiority to his master, he is happy and contented, and this is almost universally the case with the *country Negroes*. In his dreams, no visions visit him to remind him of his servitude. Born a slave, he need only be assured that he will be well fed and clothed for life, and worked in moderation, and he will regard himself as the happiest of mortals.

"A proof of the humanity with which these people are treated, is their increase by natural population. There is no certainty as to what this increase is, because of the importation of slaves from Africa, until 1808, and the emigration into this, from other states. But it is believed to be infinitely greater, than the increase amongst the poor in any part of Europe. In some parts of the state where the country is healthy, there is a *duplication* every fifteen years. In many, every twenty years, whilst in some portions there is but a trifling increase in the same period. But this is owing not to any fault in their treatment, but to the extreme insalubrity of the air in some portions of the state.

A reference also to the diseases which afflict our negroes, would show, that their food is both more wholesome and more abundant than that of the labouring classes in other countries. Dropsies, rickets, scrofula, typhus fever, and the long train of diseases which attend upon want and poverty, are far less frequent amongst our slaves, than in England, Scotland and Ireland. The diseases most fatal are catarrhs, pleurisies, peripneumony, and other diseases of the chest and lungs. These carry off numbers of prime negroes, annually, which may be owing to their carelessness and imprudence, and to their propensity to be out at nights, visiting the neighbouring plantations.

“The foregoing remarks are principally applicable to the lower parts of South-Carolina, and particularly to the *Sea-Islands*. The treatment of those in the *interior* and *upper* country differs no further, than that the animal food which they receive may be more liberal; the country affording more facilities in this respect. *Upon the whole, I think it may be affirmed with the greatest truth, that so intimately blended are the considerations of humanity and interest at the present day, that few labourers in any part of the world work easier, and have more comfort, and are, upon the whole, more contented than our black population.*”

With such evidence before us, what mind, however philanthropic, if regulated by common sense, could desire a change from the latter to the former. Who would desire that the slave, as he exists in Carolina, should become the freeman, as he is found in Connecticut?—His life, limb, property, and reputation protected;—his religious privileges secured, in a degree of freedom, unknown to the lower classes of Europe;—provided with food, shelter, and clothing, as certain as the revolutions of the seasons;—in his hours of sickness, attended with skilful medical aid;—his family supported, without himself being harassed with the cares of their present or future wants,—we are at a loss to understand in what his gains of freedom could improve his condition, or benefit the community. Thus situated, it is difficult for the most extravagant liberality to shape out for him a lot more truly allied to happiness. In reply to this, it has been contended, that we should make the slave the judge of his own condition, and leave him to choose between the alternative of freedom and slavery. We object to the proposition. That philanthropy, which has now become the groundwork of all the boasted improvements of the age, teaches us, that the greatest amount of happiness can only be secured to these people, by the exercise, on the part of those having their control, of an enlightened experience, in selecting for them a condition best adapted to their character and necessities. It is manifest that such a result can only be attained, by contrasting their present with their past circumstances. We must bear in mind that the African, in most instances, has been brought amongst us, never having known what liberty was. In his own country, he is presented to us, living under a state of the most

galling servitude,—considered by his king, or master, as below humanity, and treated as a convenience, rather than a creature possessing the feelings or the attributes of life. Not an account, which the missionary sends us of this ill-fated race, but teems with representations of their degradation and sufferings. Even now, they tell us, that for trivial offences, these unhappy victims are put to the acutest torments, while their scalps and skeletons form the principal ornaments of the palaces of their chiefs. In their native country, this has always been their history. Brought to our shores, chained and doomed to misery, they have risen in condition, and found a better lot;—they have escaped a fate and danger at home, to which mere slavery, in any shape, would seem a blessing in comparison. Nor has their condition simply improved in reference to what they themselves were. If we are to believe the thousands of Whites exiled from Europe, in which they have undergone all manner of privation, the change of the African for the better is still more imposing.

We deny, therefore, that we should make our slaves the arbiters of their own prospective happiness. If for no other cause, they are incompetent, from the very interposition of which the South so grievously complains. Their condition has been so misrepresented by those having a zeal, far in advance of their ability, that they now propose to themselves, not merely a simple equality with their white brethren, so called, but a state which promises for them a freedom from all restraint, however wholesome and necessary—a state, which could only have its existence in the mind of the dreamer or the fanatic. Our own political freedom is described to them in exaggerated terms, and they are taught to believe themselves born into the same existence with ourselves. The Declaration of Independence, which proclaims “all men created equal,” is continually held up to them as a charter of rights, framed for their especial security; but the lesson, which teaches them that the coloured man has ever been excluded from political privileges, has been artfully withheld. They are not informed, that in the battles of our revolution they formed no part of the enrolment of our armies;—that both before and after our independence, they were considered as mere property, and that, even now, their former masters of the Northern and Eastern states are seeking of the British government, indemnification for their slaves taken in our first war. Blinded, as the slave has thus been, it is not strange that he should aspire to a grade above his original destination. He sees such a condition drawn out, and coloured into a picture, which all experience teaches to be false;—one which, in the event of his emancipation, he

could never realize. In name, it would make him a freeman ; but in substance he would remain that most degraded of all beings,—“ a masterless slave.” Before, then, we convey to the minds of our slaves principles which they are not prepared to comprehend, and a hope that can never have fulfilment, the suggestion would seem far more fitting, not to say necessary, which would prompt to the due improvement of those, already indulged with a much abused and misdirected liberty. Never, until they, too, contribute to the formation of public opinion, will they be recognised on the same footing with the Whites. Providence has stamped the curse of colour upon them ; and that colour, independent of any other influence, will always mark them as inferior and distinct from our race. To free them entirely, we must share with them society—bring them into the social circle—take them into the bosom of our own families, and make them bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. That this can never be the case, so long as this one objection is so grossly offensive to the most ready of our senses, the recent excitements, to which we have alluded in a former part of our remarks, is, we think, sufficiently convincing. They must remain, as in all times they have been, a separate order from ourselves—happy in their sphere—tolerated, when not erring ; but victims, whenever, of their own head, or at the instigation of others, they presume madly to shoot out of it. Had not our limits precluded, it was our intention to have entered at large into an examination of the plans of the Colonizationists. Affording, as we believe them to do, an excellent check upon the incendiary purposes of their more zealous brethren of the Abolition Society, so long as their expenses are defrayed from out of their own pockets, and go to meliorating the condition of the free coloured man by transportation, it will be the interest of the South rather to advance, than to retard their movements. Even were such an idea within the compass of their design, it would be impossible for them to procure the entire emancipation of our slaves. With their present capital, multiplied by its own numerical amount, they could purchase scarcely one third of the yearly increase of the slave population of the south. Under such a condition of things, therefore, we have little to apprehend from their plans—which, if they keep within the bounds of a wise moderation and frame, according to the true interest and safety of all parties, the people of the southern states will be the first to appreciate their motives and to aid their undertaking.*

* See Appendix, III.

We have now gone over, briefly and hurriedly, the propositions with which we set out originally. We have performed our task simply, and have studiously avoided obscurity and circumlocution. We have desired to examine, and not to slur over, the subject of negro slavery, particularly as it exists in South Carolina—to look at all its features, as they really present themselves, and to set aside those idle anecdotes and thousand silly statements, so common among the credulous, and so important to the labours and works of the designing. Our purpose is truth, and as the slave-owner holds himself to be a man, a social being, not to say a Christian, our endeavour has been to mete out to him, that justice, which of late days, has been so sternly denied him, by those who presume to denounce, before they examine his conduct; and whose designs have been to set the unfortunate victims of their delusive instruction, to the business of midnight butchery, in order to realize an abstract principle, the truth of which, no part of the world, barbarous or civilized, has yet agreed upon. In their crusade against slavery, the Southron who believes himself as strongly provided with humanity as any other citizen of the Union,—has been pictured as a monster exceeding in atrocious practices, all the worst cruelties of Spartan or Roman barbarity. From the alleged enormity of his life, he has been denied Christian fellowship; and to such a degree have the asperities against him been carried, that men, calling themselves the ambassadors of the great Martyr of redeemed man, have pursued his departing soul at death, and by a bold assumption of divine intelligence, denied it a hope of Heaven. Happily for the Southron, however, this language is held only by the fanatic, maddened by the excess of a zeal, wanting as much in discretion, as it is destitute of truth.

It is for the reflecting portion of the people, to whom this appeal has been addressed, to silence these clamours; and, by a due regard to the requisitions of society, to put down these miserable follies, and the discontents and dangers which they must inevitably produce. It is for them, in compliance with the professions so repeatedly made, to prove their sincerity—not in a silent consciousness of disapprobation, when the bigot and the zealot are at work; but by an open, a fearless, and ready, exposition of the sources and character of the unjustifiable slanders which they have heaped upon their neighbours. Evil is, unhappily, at all times, the most active principle. Virtue, assured of her own motives, is not suspicious of those which prompt to action in others. For this reason, she is too apt to repose, when her enemy is busy and industrious. It is for her to go to the forum, to the highway and the temple, and there stem those propensities, which prompt the responsible

professors of a peaceful and gentle faith, to a forgetfulness of their true calling. Let her teach them, even as their best policy, towards the beings for whom they so profess to labour, that their misguided and misdirected zeal, must not only eventuate in ruin to the objects of their philanthropy, but must, at the same time, greatly prejudice, if not altogether restrain, with the class referred to, the otherwise continued circulation of our common religion.

APPENDIX.

I.

As recently as 1827, Lord Stowell decided in England, that "a slave going to that country, and returning to the West Indies, does not become free; but, being previously considered property, continues such! In this decision, wherein the whole question of slavery was learnedly considered, and all the Reports upon the subject reviewed, his Lordship remarks:

"Having adverted to the most of the objections that arise to the revival of slavery in the colonies, I have first to observe, that it returns upon the slave by the same title by which it grew up originally. It never was in Antigua the creature of *law*, but of that *custom* which operates with the force of law; and when it is cried out that *malus usus abolendus est*, it is first to be proved that, even in the consideration of England, the use of slavery is there considered as a *malus usus* in the colonies. Is that a *malus usus* where the Court of the King's Privy Council and the Courts of Chancery are every day carrying into full effect, in all considerations of property, in the one by appeal, and the other by original causes; and all this enjoined and confirmed by statutes? Still less is it to be considered a *malus usus* in the colonies themselves, where it has been incorporated into full life and establishment; where it is the system of the state, and of every individual in it; and 50 years have passed without any authorized condemnation of it in England as a *malus usus* in the colonies. The fact is, that in England, where villeinage of both sorts went into total decay, they had communication with no other country; and therefore it is triumphantly declared, as I have before observed, "once a freeman, ever a freeman," there being no other country with which we had immediate connexion: in which, at the time of suppression of that system, we had any occasion to trouble ourselves about. But slavery was a very favoured introduction into the colonies; it was deemed a great source of the mercantile interest of the country, and was, on that account, largely considered by the mother country, as a great source of its wealth and strength. Treaties were made on that account, and the colonies compelled to submit to those treaties by the authority of this country. This system continued entire; instead of being condemned, as *malus usus*, it was regarded as a most eminent source of its riches and power. It was at a late period of the last century it was condemned in England as an institution not fit to exist here, for reasons peculiar to our own condition; but it has been continued in our colonies, favoured and

supported by our own courts, which have liberally imparted to it their protection and encouragement. To such a system, whilst it is so supported, I rather feel it to be too strong to apply the maxim *malus usus abolendus est*. The time may come when this institution may fall in the colonies, as other institutions have done in other flourishing countries; but I am of opinion that it can only be effected at the joint expense of both countries; for it is in a peculiar measure the crime of this country, and I rather feel it to be an objection to this species of emancipation, that it is intended to be a very cheap measure here, by throwing the whole expense upon the colony. It has been said that the law of England discourages slavery, and so it certainly does within the limits of these islands; but it uses a very different language, and exerts a very different force, when it looks to its colonies; for to this trade, in those colonies, it gives almost an unbounded protection, and it is in the habit of doing so at the present time in many exercises of public authority; and even since slavery has become odious in England, it has been fully supported by the authority of many statutes, for the purpose of carrying it into full effect in the colonies. All the efforts of the persons who have contended for its abolition in the colonies, and who have obtained many acts of parliament for the regulation of it therein, have in no degree weakened the force of these English statutes which so powerfully support it in the mother country. It has been observed that the sovereign state has declared, that all laws made in the colonies, contradicting its own law, shall be null and void, and cannot be put in execution; but is that the character of the laws in the colonies for the encouragement of the proprietors of slaves? Has it not, since the declaration of its judgment against slavery, declared, in the most explicit and authentic manner, its encouragement of slavery in its colonial establishments? Have not innumerable acts passed which regulate the condition of slaves, which tend to consider them, as the colonists themselves do, as *res posite in commercio*—as goods and chattels—as subject to mortgages—as constituting part of the value of the estates—as liable to be taken in execution for debt—to be publicly sold for such purposes? and has established courts of its highest jurisdiction for the carrying into execution provisions for all these purposes? and these its most eminent courts of justice—its Court of King's Privy Council, and its Court of Chancery, where all these regulations are carried into effect with most scrupulous regularity, and under the authority of acts of parliament? Can any man doubt that, at this time of day, slaves in the colonies may not be transferred by sale made in England, and which would be affirmed without reference to the court so empowered? And how, under the guaranty of such protection, can it be asserted that the law of England does not support, and in a high degree favour, the law of slavery in its West India colonies, however it may discourage it in the mother country? Is it not most certain that this trade of the colonies has been the very favourite trade of this country, and so continues, so far as can be judged of encouragement given in various forms—the making of treaties, the institution of companies, the devolution from one company to another, the compulsion of the colonies to accept this traffic, and the recognition of it in a great



